



**OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
550 MAIN STREET
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT**

EDDIE A. PEREZ
Mayor

Telephone: (860) 543-8500
Fax: (860) 722-6606

Sarah Barr, Director of Communications

-----MEDIA RELEASE-----

CITY STRENGTHENS PROCEDURES IN TAX OFFICES

(August 5, 2005)--- The City of Hartford has announced that it will be strengthening procedures in both the Tax Collector's and Tax Assessor's offices. In particular, the City will focus on how motor vehicle tax release forms and how COBRA benefits are handled.

The City conducted a review of Tax Assessor and Tax Collector procedures after Finance Department employees brought certain discrepancies to the attention of the Administration. The resulting review showed that three Tax Collector employees misused motor vehicle tax release forms allowing fellow employees to reregister their vehicles with the State DMV, even though they were clearly delinquent on their motor vehicle property tax to the City of Hartford. The three employees no longer work for the City.

A fourth individual in the Tax Assessor's office is accused of adjusting motor vehicle tax bills for him and two others. Additionally, this individual is accused of illegally depositing a COBRA benefit check paid to the City into his personal account. This individual is identified as Dwaine Nelson of East Hartford. He was arrested June 29th and charged with larceny in the 5th degree and forgery in the 2nd degree.

Mayor Eddie Perez says, "No City employee is above the law. This review shows how Hartford is determined to raise the bar when it comes to accountability." The Mayor goes on to say, "We are encouraged to see that City employees will do the right thing when it comes to ensuring the integrity of the tax collection system."